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# Attractiveness of right wing oriented movements and subcultures in modern society of the Slovak republic

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## Abstract

The attention of this article is pointed on individual socio – political aspects interconnected with right - wing the Slovak republic. This work reflects contemporary knowledge in the field of socio – scientific disciplines, while directly dealing with the topic of the article, and focuses the attention on the most important relations of examined phenomenon. One of the important aspects, in the framework of theoretical definition of the topic, are concepts of works written by Neil J. Smelser (1963) and William Kornhauser (2008), who deal with collective behavior and mass society. The main instrument for the implementation of quantitative research is a standardized questionnaire to monitor right-wing extremism, xenophobia and intolerance in the attitudes of Slovak population. The sample consists of 1000 respondents from eastern regions of the Slovak Republic. Social research focused on the extreme right helps to understand the whole set of phenomena and events in historical and social contexts. It also helps to create a professional and fair public debate on this complex social phenomenon. The ambition of this article is to highlight the need for a new perspective on the issue of extreme right-wing movements and subcultures and the far right as a whole, given an objective and comprehensive picture of the social realities that are part of this phenomenon.

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## 1. Introduction

Slovakia at the beginning of its modern history after the collapse of the socialist establishment in 1989 was characterized by a strong desire for independence. This desire was fulfilled in 1993 the division of Czechoslovakia.

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The nascent democratic multiparty system has brought with it other than positive social change and a host of new problems, which require an offset state and the public. The actual division of Czechoslovakia had risen in both countries, but especially in Slovakia wave of strong nationalism, which resulted in an increase of extreme and radical forces and the emergence of groups promoting extremist ideas. The issue of democratization in the form of a transition from an authoritarian regime was in Slovak conditions intertwined process of completing the Slovak national emancipation. On these foundations in Slovakia began to create political - social platform of thought, on the one hand, the political space previously unseen marked success, but in a public space can watch her getting stronger influence, whether in public opinion, or real-life of society. We're talking about extreme right-wing subjects that have come gradually to the attention of the media, political and academic. Social research focused on the extreme right helps to understand the whole set of phenomena and events in historical and social contexts. It also helps to create a professional and objective public debate on this complex social phenomenon.

Research intolerance and extremism in Slovakia in comparison with Western Europe has not built an established tradition. Even though the manifestations of right-wing extremism and hateful attitudes of directed mainly against the Roma minority in the 90<sup>th</sup> escalated, interested professionals about the problem not reflect its importance. The first attempt to grasp the phenomenon of extremism in professional discussion in Slovakia seminar was organized in 1998 in Bratislava, titled "Right-wing extremism in Slovakia and Germany." A potential event, whose ambition was to draw the attention of the scientific community to the newly created problems in society, however, has not been used for over a decade. Despite the efforts of NGOs to highlight the evolution and transformation of right-wing extremism in the region, the first relevant research focused on the social aspects of intolerance in society in Slovak conditions appear until after 2010. However, currently there is no official output, which would comprehensively monitor the social and economic aspects of support extreme right-wing subjects in the country.

### 1.1. Research approaches

Research intolerance and right-wing extremism in the world has a solid foundation. In 2006 issued by Professor Thomas Siedler interesting study titled *"Family and Politics: Does Parental Unemployment Cause Right - Wing Extremism?"* A research project was realized in Germany and examines the extent to which unemployment affects parents to young people during childhood and how deeply this affects the individual to extreme right-wing attitudes and xenophobia. According to Siedler [1] *"estimates from three different data materials in Germany show a positive relationship between youth growing up in families with unemployed parents and right-wing extremism, xenophobia in particular."* Instrumental variables estimates suggest strong and significant effects of parental unemployment on right-wing extremism. How to claim Siedler [2] *"is consistent with the classical theory of economic interest and voting behavior, which predict that people who have feelings of economic insecurity are more susceptible to right-wing extremism and anti-immigration attitudes."*

The study is mainly based on the theory of economic interest, which by Seymour M. Lipset suggests reasons why parental unemployment may be a determinant of right-wing sentiments. Individuals who come from backgrounds where there was unemployment can be seen jobs very sensitive and thus developing in them a sense of economic uncertainty. Can be concluded that foreigners occupy the limited jobs. That is why there is a risk that these individuals will be more open to the propaganda of extreme right-wing groups, which consists mainly in the promotion and protection of indigenous people's interests against immigrants.

Siedler in the publication is also working with other arguments of various political theories that help explain why parental unemployment determines extremist attitudes of youth. One theory deals with the hypothesis of rational protest vote. This means that some individuals are inclined to extreme right-wing ideas on the basis of a protest against the socio - economic conditions, dissatisfaction with the political system or disenchantment with the traditional political elite and thus the individual and his extremist attitude lies more in the social and economic discontent - launched for example, parents losing their jobs, as the representation of a real right-wing ideology. Another theory is based on the hypothesis that support for extreme right-wing movements and organizations is based on a true political beliefs. It is not therefore support the extreme right due to benefit from the program but is an expression of ideological persuasion.

This document is unique in that it is the first study that seeks to examine the causal effects of right-wing extremism. It also provides the first evidence on the intergenerational relationship between economic conditions of parents and extremist attitudes and behavior of young people. The study shows this relationship as young people fear of marginalization, economic uncertainty and discontent with the political system and political attitudes of their

parents, which are based on economic expectations. The results of studies of Thomas Siedler correspond to these conclusions. The study demonstrates a causal relationship between unemployment parents in childhood individual and his entry to extreme right-wing youth.

Another major project in extremism and intolerance is the work of Swiss collective of authors from "Univerzité De Genève" entitled *"Monitoring Misanthropy and rightwing extremist attitudes in Switzerland - An exploratory study"* of 2006. The aim of this work is to present a tool for monitoring right-wing extremism, xenophobia and intolerance in the attitudes of the Swiss population. The authors have developed and tested national surveys strategy that is compatible with international surveys and can be adapted to different political context.

### 1.2. Conceptualization: rightwing mobilization

In 1963 issued professor of sociology Neil Smelser from University of California publication entitled *"Theory of collective Behavior."* The most important aspect of Smelser's work is to define the social, economic and political conditions as factors influencing the formation of groups and movements, which can be defined as radical or extremist. The basis of the theory of collective behavior by Smelser's argument that collective behavior is determined primarily structural, utility, structural strain, growth and spread of a generalized belief, causative factors, mobilization of participants for action and function of social control. The basis of the theory of collective behavior by Smelser's argument that collective behavior is determined primarily by structural benefit, structural tensions, growth and spread of a generalized belief, causative factors, mobilization of participants for action and function of social control. Framework established determinants of collective behavior are trying to avoid the deficiencies, which contain reductionist theory of relative deprivation, social disorganization theory, theory of culture and identity, theory of competition, resource mobilization and theory of political opportunity. These different theories in order to explain the specific causes of extremist movements focus only on the specific terms of the dimension but ignored by their conditions, which in turn are part of other theories in this group. In contrast with these theories, the theory of collective behavior recognizes that social, economic and political structures and conditions may facilitate the emergence of an organized movement, as associated with extremism, but also true that some combination of these determinants do not guarantee that these movements should contact the political violence.

William Kornhauser, professor of sociology at the University of California, in his most important work *"Politics of Mass Society"* in 1959 embracing theoretical concept of mass society in relation of "the masses" and "elite." *"The theory of mass society mainly focuses on mass movements and popular movements that operate outside of, or against social order."* [3] Kornhauser [4] in their work indicates that these mass movements tend to engulf the whole of society and can be tremendously destructive. Mass society as it is prone to support destructive political movements that seek to eliminate freedom. To talk about mass society, which must have specific properties. These properties are atomization (or alienation), access and availability.

By Susan Mantino [5] Kornhauser's theory is based on the assumption that if *"the company shows signs of mass society, then there is a tendency on the one hand, participatory relationship" masses "and on the other hand, the ratio of" elites "assist developing extreme, possibly totalitarian movements."*

As summed up in his work Mareš [6] main feature of mass society is the lack of independent and pluralistic groups whose existence determines the balance between the different presentation views in society. Mantino's participatory ratio, which is ultimately crucial variable that affects the success of extremist movements, changes through practical expressions of independent groups. Participatory aspect ratio becomes mass participation through withdrawal or its unification; "the masses" are then easily accessible to the leaders of totalitarian or extremist interpretations of society. The typical structure of mass societies, which consist, on the one hand, the fully accessible positions elites, has the potential totalitarian leaders who are ready to transform the totalitarian mass society. On the other hand, there is the typical structure of the manipulable masses, which are prone to extreme or irrational interpretations emerging societal crises and are heavily accessed handling totalitarian rulers. The way to achieve the conditions for the success of extreme movement depends on individual factors.

## 2. The research design

Research of right – wing extremism has not a long tradition in Slovakia, but in other countries, he devoted a number of professional teams and institutions. Therefore it is very important to draw inspiration research plans just in countries where an area is fully established and tested in the long term. Major research efforts are mainly directed

at aspects of intolerance such as racism and xenophobia, but as they say Sandro Cattacin et al. [7] “*also sexism, homophobia, complaints against all types of lifestyles and handicaps.*” That is why we try to combine different aspects of right-wing extremism and intolerance in our study.

The basic objective of the research project is to find a tool that is compatible with existing international research tools in order to achieve the necessary quality research work. To achieve this, we have focused on collecting and evaluating research instruments that have been tried and tested in international studies.

### 2.1. *Some major results of the survey*

Based on the above-mentioned factors, we decided to quantitative strategy and use research tool developed by experts from „Univerzité De Genève“ in 2006, which is aimed at predicting and monitoring the development of hate and extreme right-wing attitudes and opinions of the population revised in the context of the conditions in Slovak republic. This tool is aimed at measuring the development and changes of extreme right-wing views, which are related to mobilization potential. Of primary significance is not to identify specific individuals or groups that pose a risk, but to measure the development of extremist attitudes and response rate in a population of extremist ideologies. However, currently being finished collecting data through a questionnaire, which provided us with Professor S. Cattacin from the University of Geneva.

Therefore, in our work are just some of the basic features of survey, which took place before the main phase of research and use it in their own questionnaire focused primarily on inter-ethnic relations within the region between the majority population and the Roma ethnic group and the prospect of attractive ideas of the extreme right to the majority society. This questionnaire allows us to configure the full version of the questionnaire Professor Cattacin on the conditions in the Slovak Republic.

Participated in the survey N = 1000 respondents coming from the eastern region, namely the cities of Prešov, Košice and Sabinov. Margin of error in this case is  $\pm 3\%$ .

The presentation of significant relations between qualitative variables is based on the chi – square test of independence. The analysis and the tests have been realized with the data analysis software SPSS.

Based on a questionnaire survey, we came to several important findings. Here are their basic characteristics:

- 71% of respondents have a negative experience with the Roma minority
- However, for 67% of respondents are not substantial ethnic composition of the population of the region
- 69% of respondents think that the conflicts arising in the region, resulting in particular in relation to the majority of the Roma minority

Even though the respondents in specific locations perceived ethnic conflict between the Roma minority and majority society, the primary concern for them is the Roma ethnicity as expressed in their responses to our survey. Just objective perception of the facts, however, use extreme right wing parties that their unrealistic proposals affecting majority society is on the basis of perception of a conflict between the majority and minorities.

- In 53% of the population, the Roma are reluctant to engage in work
- Up to 75% of the population expressed the view that the state provides the Roma minority high social benefits and the economic burden of the working group

Majority society sees a fundamental problem in accessing employment of the Roma ethnic group and thus there is a certain tension between the majority population and the Roma minority. Even in this case we can point to the fact that extreme right-wing parties on the basis of its populist propaganda justifying the instability of regional development in the field of employment law reluctance to involve the Roma in employment and thereby gaining the support of the majority of the site, because it is directly and actually confronted with specific problems associated with unemployment of the Roma minority in the region.

- 58% think that crime in the region is mainly committed by the Roma minority
- 57% of respondents perceived physical threat from the Roma minority

Crime Roma minority is the most controversial factor in interethnic relations. Crime statistics based on ethnicity is not mentioned and therefore occur in the majority of prejudices and stereotypes. It should, however, take into account the fact that the sense of threat from the Roma minority is not based on stereotypes or prejudices, but mainly from personal experience population risk sites. That is why it can be assumed that, in principle; crime is a major factor for the negative perception of the Roma minority in particular regions. The campaign of extreme right-wing entities is based right of access to allow relief from a "criminal elements", which called the Roma minority. This raises the interesting paradox, however, when extremist movements trying to get rid of crime in the region, but their suggestions for solving this problem is equally unlawful conduct.

- The population in the eastern region to the 74% thinks that the Roma do not want to participate in a joint building society

It is more than likely that the perception of the Roma minority in hazardous locations is not based on specific forms of hatred mainstream society in the region, but is primarily determined by social factors, the nature of the behavior factor and the lack of integration of the Roma minority. Respondents as potential voters or supporters of extreme right-wing actors give their support to those entities not based on sympathy for them, but rather on the basis of unfavorable state of interethnic relations in the region and subsequent frothing the simple solution that the subjects offered. This condition is based on the instability of regional development.

### 3. Conclusion

Attractiveness and progress of the extreme right in Slovakia based on the real problems that people of the region must be addressed every day. Offer simple solutions by extremist movements will often times last resort to solve situation. Conflict majority with the Roma minority, which is based on the real causes of such a high crime rate and unemployment rate in the region, is a realistic picture of the current period and right-wing subjects exploit this fact to their advantage. Although most members of the majority (71%) have negative experiences with the Roma minority, it is confirmed that ethnicity largely (67%) is not essential for the formation of negative perceptions and inter-ethnic conflict between the majority population and the Roma minority. Alarming is the fact that the public sphere is increasingly radicalized, this is due to the failure to address emerging issues related to the instability of the region's development and citizens often remain on solving their problems themselves. For extremist groups, the situation is fertile ground. To act upon the inhabitants of Slovak regions affected by high growth conflicts with the Roma minority and influence opinions and attitudes of the majority, to support extremism, which is often a last resort.

The issue of right-wing extremism and radicalism in our country increasingly discussed topic. Themselves Heads of state apparatus often encourage, perhaps unconsciously, and perhaps consciously, operation and development of various radical groups, groups, civil organizations and political parties for its harsh rhetoric and increasing ethnic and social tensions in society. It is therefore understandable that the extreme right-wing subjects using this condition and trying to get ahead in the public domain with different ideas and thoughts and thus consciously increase their attractiveness in relation to mainstream society. Direct proportion is to the increase of hateful attitudes not only towards the Roma, but also to other vulnerable groups in society. In this moment of global crisis of some kind, it is necessary to take into account all socio - economic causes of disturbed relations between countries and attempting to problems stemming from these disturbed relationships to solve multidisciplinary.

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